**Radio Salaries Up … Modestly**

**by Bob Papper**

The latest RTDNA/Hofstra University Annual Survey found that local radio news salaries rose by 2.8% from last year. That’s up from last year’s 2.3. Factor in low inflation of 2.1%, and radio salaries managed a 0.7 real increase over the last year … and nearly matched the average U.S. hourly wage gain of 2.9% for 2017.

A comparatively good year, overall for radio news salaries, although it was a mixed picture for the two most common positions: news director and news reporter. Note that median is the best indicator of typical salaries.

**Radio news salaries – 2018**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Average | Median | Minimum | Maximum |
| News Director | $45,400  | $37,000  | $15,000  | $112,000  |
| News Reporter | 41,500  | 38,000  | 15,000  | 325,000  |
| News Producer | 40,000  | 37,000  | 27,000 | 75,000  |
| News Anchor | 58,500  | 49,000  | 20,000  | 275,000  |
| Sports Anchor | 40,200  | 40,000  | 15,000  | 100,000  |
| Web Prod/Ed | 50,100  | 49,700  | 20,000  | 160,000  |

# Average radio news director salaries went up, but they held steady in the more meaningful median (typical) category. That happens becauselarge and major market salaries bring up the average, but the larger number of lower, smaller and medium market salaries bring down the typical pay. That’s why the median news director salary can be lower than median salaries for news reporter or news producer. Those two latter positions are more often found in larger, higher-paying markets, while news director, frequently the only news employee, is found across the board. News reporters also rose on average, but they actually dropped in median. News producers dropped in both average and median. News anchors, sports anchors and web producers/writer all went up in both. The survey did not find enough sports reporters to be able to use the numbers. That may be a warning right there.

# Five and ten year median radio news salary comparisons 2018 to 2013 to 2008

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 2018 | 2013 | 5-Year Percentage Change | 2008 | 10-Year Percentage Change |
| INFLATION |  |  | +7.4% |  | +17.4% |
| All radio news |  |  | +7.6 |  | +44.1 |
| News Director | $37,000 | $35,000 | +5.7 | $30,500 | +21.3 |
| News Reporter | 38,000 | 33,000 | +15.2 | 25,000 | +52 |
| News Producer | 37,000 | 40,000 | -7.5 | 30,000 | +23.3 |
| News Anchor | 49,000 | 45,000 | +8.9 | 22,000 | +122.7 |
| Sports Anchor | 40,000 | 35,000 | +14.3 | 32,000 | +25 |
| Web editor/producer | 49,700 | 45,000 | +10.4 | \* | na |

Five and 10 year salary comparisons continue to show two entirely different pictures. Still, the overall news is good. For the first time in half a decade, the 5-year radio salary changes exceeded inflation. Barely, to be sure, but up is always better than down when it comes to money. The 10 year picture has been better because we’ve been working up from some pretty low salaries a decade ago.

**Median radio news salaries by market size – 2018**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Major | Large | Medium | Small |
| News Director | $82,500  | $53,000  | $35,000  | $30,000  |
| News Reporter | 49,100  | 40,000  | 30,000  | 24,500  |
| News Producer | 42,100  | 31,000  | 27,000  | \* |
| News Anchor | 69,300  | 49,000  | 29,500  | 28,300  |
| Sports Anchor | 75,000  | 40,000  | 18,000  | 38,500  |
| Web Prod/Ed | 58,000  | 30,000  | 36,000  | 30,500  |

\*Insufficient data

News director, news anchor and sports anchor salaries went up in all market sizes except medium. News reporter salaries fell in all market seizes except medium, where they remained the same. News producers dropped across the board. Web producers/editors were up in the biggest and smallest markets but down in the two middle groups.

Mostly, salaries go up as market size goes up. No surprise there. They also tend to go up as staff size increases, but much of that is a function of market size as well. Number of stations in a local group has no consistent effect on salaries, and region makes no consistent difference, either.

What makes a huge difference in pay is commercial vs. non-commercial. Salaries for non-commercial stations were 46% higher, overall, than at commercial stations. That’s a 7 point higher differential than a year ago. Every position was higher except news producer and sports. News producer was 11 points higher for commercial stations, and non-commercial stations didn’t report any full-timers in sports, so there’s no way to compare.

Major markets are those with 1 million or more listeners. Large markets are those from 250,000 to 1 million; medium markets are from 50,000 to 250,000; and small markets have fewer than 50,000 listeners.

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**About the Survey**

The RTDNA/Hofstra University Survey was conducted in the fourth quarter of 2017 among all 1,683 operating, non-satellite television stations and a random sample of 3,542 radio stations. Valid responses came from 1,333 television stations (79.2%) and 415 radio news directors and general managers representing 1,110 radio stations. Some data sets (e.g. the number of TV stations originating local news, getting it from others and women TV news directors) are based on a complete census and are not projected from a smaller sample.